A large Regency carved rectangular overmantle mirror

£16,000



REF: 6078

Height: 169 cm (66.5")

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Width: 116 cm (45.7")

Depth: 8 cm (3.1")

Description

The wonderful original rectangular mercury glass plate set into a painted and parcel gilt frame carved with a cushion border of bound laurel leaves to three sides, with carved gilded paterae to the top corners.

England, circa 1820

Condition: The top right patera was missing so has been recast in gesso and gilded, consistent with the original. Signs of old worm to the reverse. Small chips to the gilding touched in. The plate with oxidisation to the mercury. The back with taped gaps to the boards

Rooted in classical design, the laurel motif was originally a signifier of wealth and achievement. The pattern books of Hope and Smith in 1807 and 1808 respectively, inspired by discoveries of site excavations at Herculaneum and Pompeii, accelerated the fascination with Greek antiquity, the motifs of which had already been used in late 18th century Neoclassical furniture, though in a more restrained form.

This mirror shows clear influences from George Smith's 1808 book Household Furniture and Interior Decoration. Plate 155, titled 'Glass Frames' shows a similar frame detail of bound laurel leaves with square block corners enclosing a classical motif. Plate 151 shows a similar mirror resting on a fire surround, its rectilinear form offering an architectural contrast to the more extravagant furniture that surrounds it.

Retaining its original mercury glass mirror plate, gilding and paintwork, this mirror is a fine example of Regency design.

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